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May 24, 1967 - Friday

Admiral McCain with Admiral Kirn and a Staff Officer came over to see me this morning, to show me various maps relative to the Israeli-Egyptian confrontation. He indicated the whereabouts of British and US Naval units that might be used in the event of an emergency. The fact remains that we can employ no real force in the Red Sea for several weeks. If there were to be a joint expedition composed only of US and British vessels, the question of command would come up; since our forces would greatly outnumber the British, it would be natural to have an American Admiral in charge, but certain political considerations have been advanced favoring the reverse.

McCain is flying over this afternoon to Stuttgart, to elicit CINCEUR's views on contingency planning. To date, his own headquarters have not been informed by the Navy Department in Washington regarding such plans.

The pressures for the United States to take unilateral action in this crisis are becoming stronger and stronger. None of the maritime nations have shown any enthusiasm for intervention. However, until U Thant renders his report to the UN, which is expected tomorrow or Sunday, everything will be in suspense, unless a precipitate attack is made by one or the other in the area.

All Arab nations have offered to send troops to help Nasser in the event of war. Even though he continues to fulminate against King Faisal and King Hussein, the one point upon which they all have been able to agree has been their hostility toward Israel.

Luncheon at White's.

I presented Certificates of Fellowship on behalf of the American College of Cardiology to Dr. J. P. Shillingford and Professor John Goodwin this afternoon, according to the wishes of Rear Admiral R. J. Pearson, the Attending Physician at the United States Capitol. We arranged for this informal ceremony to be photographed.

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Congresswoman Margaret Heckler, Republican of Massachusetts, called on me this afternoon. She is nimble of mind, attractive in appearance, gay in conversation. She has been here with a delegation conducting investigation into displacement of material and its relocation as a result of withdrawal of US forces from France. She is a freshman member of the House, having defeated the redoubtable Joe Martin in the last election. Joe, now 84, made the mistake of trying to cling too long to his office.

General Al Gruenther called on me at the office with members of the Executive Committee of Rexall Drug and Chemical Company. Those with him were Justin Dart, Ernest R. Breech, William Gossett, and Holmes Tuttle. This visit was especially enjoyable, for all these men are familiar and interested in Western European economic and financial matters. Breech is now Chairman of TWA. They have seen many individuals in the City, and Al has talked to former military friends. They all appeared pessimistic over British industrial production prospects, feeling, as I do, the drag upon them because of lack of profit incentives.

Later this group came out to Regents Park, bringing their wives and a handful of relatives. Philip Gore and wife, and Rear Admiral Elliott Strauss joined them there. E is still speechless, and did not come downstairs.

I had an opportunity to talk to Al about the gloomy Middle East situation. He feels any intervention there that might lead us into participation in a widespread war would set off a tremendous political explosion at home, despite the great influence of American Jews on Congressional action. He ascribes this largely to the divisions amongst our people over Vietnam, and the size of our commitment there.

Although the leading members of Government and of the Opposition in Great Britain are desperately concerned with the Middle East situation, the public, as is its wont, remains moderately apathetic. I talked to Paul Gore-Booth this evening, and it is evident they will not have any solid policies until George Brown and George Thomson are debriefed tonight, and until U Thant lays his findings before the UN tomorrow.

would be used at my own funeral service, I would select as an opening what was used here:

> "I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord."

then the 23rd Psalm, the Lord's Prayer, and to finish, the Battle Hymn of the Republic. If there were to be another hymn, I would add "Lead Kindly Light.

I returned home too late to change my striped trousers and mourning garb for lunch with:

Sir Walter and Lady Bromley Davenport
Mrs. Lewis Thompson, Sr.
Mrs. Lewis Thompson, Jr.
Lord and Lady Kindersley
Mrs. Lang.

I left early, since Ted Heath had asked me to stop and see him at Albany. We talked about Middle East affairs. He is preparing for the debate in the House tomorrow on this subject.

After a haircut, I went to see Admiral McCain, who discussed a top secret operation on which I was briefed yesterday afternoon (b1)

From Naval Headquarters I went to see George Brown at the Foreign Office. He had Denis Allen with him. He told me that at Cabinet this morning they decided in favor of the issurance of a declaration by all maritime powers that can be induced to join, asserting free passage through the Gulf of Aqaba. The matter of how this can be enforced is still at issue. We did not derive much comfort from our reflections on Middle East affairs. To date, it is only ourselves, the British, and the Dutch who have shown stout hearts.

We sent off this morning a telegram I went over last night at home with Bill Brubeck, as follows: